

# Special Forces: Day Twenty-four

## Intermediate Training: Unit One

### Selfless Service 101

#### Whose Life is it, Anyway?

Bob was a remarkable, young and single SF soldier. Not only was he good at his job, he continuously sought opportunities to become a better soldier, such as attending and graduating from the Special Forces HALO school. HALO stands for High Altitude, Low Opening, or parachuting at altitudes higher than radar can detect and opening one's parachute lower than radar normally detects. He was also a dedicated Christian, who sought opportunities to present the Gospel to his fellow comrades-in-arms. I can remember one day entering the barracks building where Bob resided and watching him begin to share the gospel to another single soldier, as we were walking up the stairs to the second floor. Later Bob told me that he had asked God for some sort of a sign that it was His time and I walked into the building. He took my entrance as his sign since he knew that I would support him, if needed.

Bob was 'Uncle Bob' to my young son Danny, since he would frequently visit our home and spend time in fellowship with us and laughing and playing with Danny. When Bob was killed as a result of a parachute malfunction, a tragic occurrence while being inserted into a training operation, it really hit hard. I was angry at God for taking one of His front line soldiers, one of the few soldiers I knew who made sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ life's number one priority. I just couldn't understand why God would let such a thing happen. The events that followed answered my thundering **"Why, God?"**

I was part of the same training operation, running the communications operation at the battalion's forward operating base where the commander and his staff were located. Since I had known Bob, I volunteered to meet with a local minister that would be presiding at a memorial service for Bob at our field location. I met with the minister and we just talked about Bob and his life as a soldier and as a Christian. The minister came to our field site and walked into a very quiet small room filled with soldiers, the battalion commander and his entire staff. The expectation of the attendees of similar memorial services is to listen to a short memorial to a fallen soldier and go about their business. What was heard that day was a clear presentation of the precious gospel, the very truth that had been the apex of Bob's life! The minister shared the fact that Bob, while he lived on earth, had decided to follow Christ and now rested in eternity with God. There was not a person in that small room that did not come face-to-face with the reality of 'eternal values' and the need to make a decision that would last forever.

After the service, I remembered Bob having told me once that he wanted everything in his life to be used for the glory of God. It was at that moment that I realized the significance of that small memorial service in the field where an entire battalion staff with its support personnel received one of the clearest presentations of the gospel of Jesus Christ I have ever heard! It was then I understood that God had used Bob's death for His Glory! Bob had lived for opportunities to spread the precious gospel of Jesus Christ. Even that small memorial service served to that same end – an opportunity to share the gospel.

## Key Verse:

*“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”. Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)*

*“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:3 (NKJV)*

*“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord”. Romans 6:11 (NKJV)*

We live in a culture that worships the god of ‘self’. All one has to do is turn on the radio, glance at a magazine rack in the supermarket, tune in to just about any syndicated television, or view advertisements in just about any format for just about any product out there. It’s mostly about satisfying ‘self’ in one form or another. Our schools, from elementary school to institutions of higher learning, preach self-actualization, self-esteem, self-empowerment, self-pride – just to name a few. The cult of self has even invaded the church, as evidenced by a plethora of teaching that takes God’s precious promises and turns them into mechanisms for us to ‘demand’ things from God, often under the guise of ‘claiming’ our ‘rights’ as children of the King.

If a preacher or speaker said to an audience “Jesus calls us to follow Him,” very few in that audience would argue. In fact, in some churches, the “Amen!” corner would strongly voice its approval. On the other hand, if the speaker announced: “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die,” I wonder just how many would agree. One of the great martyrs of the church, Dietrich Bonhoffer, not only said it, he believed it to the extent that he left comfort and safety in England during WWII to return to his German homeland and serve with the persecuted church, ultimately being arrested and later executed by the S.S. Black Guards. Was this young Lutheran pastor right? What did Jesus himself have to say about it?

*When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. Mark 8:34,35 (NKJV). See also Matt. 16:24–27; Luke 9:22–26*

If the authors of three separate gospels record the same statement of Jesus in almost identical words, who am I to even try and argue the point? Furthermore, the picture of having passed from death to life is seen over and over again in the New Testament when describing the difference between a Christless existence and our new life in Christ. I have often observed a contradiction between what God has declared and what my life demonstrates. I might even have some company here. My desire to please myself goes down kicking and screaming at times, but that does not alter the truth that “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”

## So What!

The question “Whose life is it, anyway?” sort of blasted its way into my brain housing group one morning a few weeks ago while I was sucking wind on an exercise machine in a small gym facility. It wasn’t the first time I was too tired to interrupt what God was trying to get through my thick skull. The question keeps coming up. Other questions seem to follow. “Whose time is it, anyway?” “Whose money is it, anyway?” Who really owns our family homestead at 914 Candlestar Loop in Fountain, Colorado?”

I don’t know about you, but I need the occasional reminder of God’s truth. He has declared me dead to sin and that my life “... *is hidden with Christ in God.*” That means that my part is to

agree with God, let go of my highly regarded 'self' and yield to the Holy Spirit so that Jesus Christ is free to live His life through me.

Our Lord does call us to die, to let go of ourselves and become lost in Him to the point that, like my friend Bob, all that we are can be used to share His love and grace.

So I am left to ask myself one more time: **“Whose am I, anyway?”**

And I ask you today, **“Whose are you?”**

If we say we are His and really mean it, we can share these prayerful words by Frances R. Haveregal from his hymn, "Take my Life"...